

Washington, D.C. – After passing the strongest ethics and lobbying reforms since the Watergate era, Congressman Charlie Wilson (OH-6) last night backed congressional ethics reforms that will establish an Office of Congressional Ethics and help hold members of Congress accountable for their actions. The new House Rule was approved by a vote of 229-182 and does not require Senate consideration.

The new House rule creates the Office of Congressional Ethics, which will be comprised of six individuals appointed jointly by the Speaker and the Minority Leader. Current members of Congress and lobbyists would not be eligible to serve on the panel.

“This is another positive step Democrats have taken to clean up Washington and change business as usual,” Wilson said.

The panel has the power to initiate investigations of Members of Congress when it deems appropriate. Investigations could only be initiated if supported by a Democratic and Republican member of the panel. At the conclusion of an investigation, the panel would report its findings to the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct (Ethics Committee) and recommend whether the committee should review the allegations.

The new rule follows the enactment of The Honest Leadership, Open Government Act, which brought unprecedented transparency to lobbyists’ activities and was hailed by reform groups as a “sea change for citizens” and “landmark reform.”

###